

# ASSESSOR

## DESCRIPTION

The Department of Real Estate Assessments is responsible for the annual assessment of all real estate in Chesterfield County and for the maintenance and retention of accurate and up-to-

date property records. Property records are available to the public. The department also administers the Land Use Assessment Program.

## FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	<b>FY2002 Actual</b>	<b>FY2003 Adopted</b>	<b>FY2004 Biennial Planned</b>	<b>FY2004 Adopted</b>	<b>Change FY2003 to FY2004</b>	<b>FY2005 Projected</b>	<b>FY2006 Projected</b>	<b>FY2007 Projected</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	\$2,163,467	\$2,261,400	\$2,261,400	\$2,331,300	3.1%	\$2,331,300	\$2,331,300	\$2,331,300
<b>Operating</b>	219,808	269,900	269,900	271,300	0.5%	271,300	271,300	271,300
<b>Capital</b>	<u>25,908</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	0.0%	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$2,409,183	\$2,531,300	\$2,531,300	\$2,602,600	2.8%	\$2,602,600	\$2,602,600	\$2,602,600
<b>Revenue</b>	<u>11,424</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	0.0%	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>
<b>Net Cost</b>	\$2,397,759	\$2,523,300	\$2,523,300	\$2,594,600	2.8%	\$2,594,600	\$2,594,600	\$2,594,600
<b>FT Pos.</b>	43	43	43	43	0	43	43	43

## BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Real Estate Assessor's Office continues to manage an ever-increasing workload with little or no increase in available resources. The number of taxable parcels in Chesterfield County is steadily increasing each year.

During FY2001, the database used by the Assessor's Office for property records was converted from a Microsoft Access database to an Oracle database, allowing for greater capacity and integration with the upcoming Chesterfield Development Information System (CDIS). The Assessor's Office is also working with the Information Systems Technology Department to prepare other systems in use by the Assessor's Office for the conversion to CDIS. For more information on CDIS, please see the Community Development Administration narrative.

The department continually looks for opportunities to improve on existing processes. To that end, the Residential Appraisal division of the department was restructured during FY2003 to create a more consistent application of policies and procedures as they pertain to annual review ratings and workload.

The division has also implemented a new systematic parcel inspection process that schedules property inspections such that each property in Chesterfield County will be inspected on a ten-year cycle.

In an effort to provide improved services to customers and staff, the department began scanning field sketches of new and existing dwellings. The existing system has proven inadequate to accommodate the more complicated and intricate details that are becoming the standard of today's construction. A new system has been identified that would provide both the elements of easy sketch entry and improved readability. It would also ensure the preservation of the original source document and make the sketches readily available to appraisal staff. Funding for the cost of software and conversion of current data to the new system was provided in FY2003.

As part of the county's e-Government initiative, the Assessor's Office, with the assistance of the Information Systems Technology Department, put real estate parcel information on the Internet for

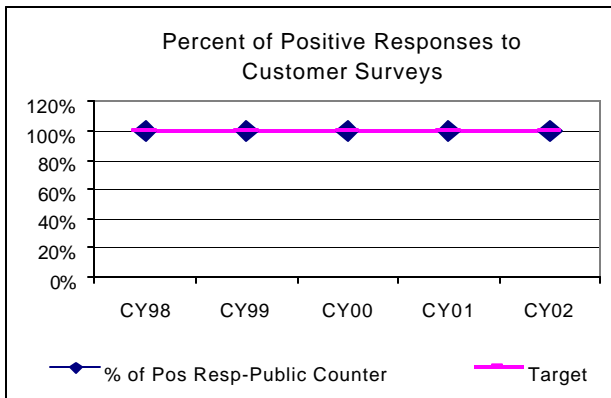
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public access. This allows citizens to access information about their property online, which eliminates the need to call or visit the Assessor's Office. This was implemented in FY2002. As part of the e-Government initiatives for FY2003, a project is underway that will provide browser access to assessment data to county staff and customers who come to the Assessor's Office through the CountyNet intranet.

The Assessor's Office also continues to work with IST toward putting the Commercial Appraisal Division's property records on the new REACH system. This will allow for a more systematic and efficient approach to valuing commercial properties. The new application will automate and streamline many of the division's processes that are currently manual. This is expected to be operational by the summer of 2003.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

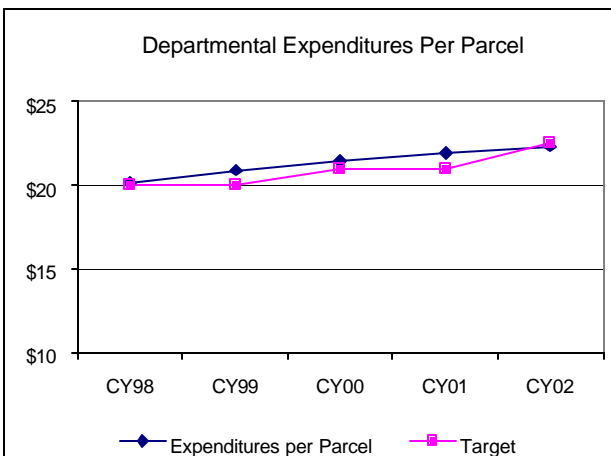
**Goal:** Consistently exceed customer expectations. Supports countywide strategic goal number 2  
**Objective:** To provide prompt, courteous, and knowledgeable responses to all inquiries  
**Measure:** Percent of positive responses to customer surveys



### Initiatives

- Customer surveys distributed at front counter
- Customer service training for all employees

**Goal:** To be a recognized leader in the assessment field. Supports countywide strategic goal number 1  
**Objective:** To ensure fiscal integrity of resource allocations  
**Measure:** Annual expenditures to parcel count (taxable and exempt)



### Initiatives

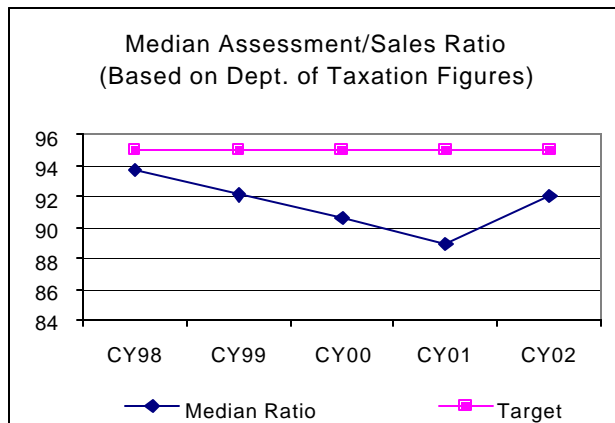
- Departmental focus on fiscal responsibility
- Automation enhancements

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**Goal:** To be a recognized leader in the assessment field. Supports countywide strategic goal number 1

**Objective:** To ensure assessment integrity

**Measure:** Median assessment/sales ratio



## Initiatives

- Annual reassessments of all properties
- In-house and outside appraiser training
- Assessment guidelines
- Weekly reviews of current sales/assessment ratio

Note: The Virginia Department of Taxation annually publishes the Assessment/Sales Ratio Study. The basis for the information reported in this document is the actual selling price of the property divided by its assessed value at the time of sale. These ratios are averaged for each locality in the state, and the average is reported as the locality's assessment/sales ratio. The report also includes the coefficient of dispersion, which measures the variation between the ratios for individual properties. The latest report provided by the Department of Taxation is for 2000. Information included in this graph for 2001 and 2002 are preliminary figures furnished by the state. For more information about assessment/sales ratios, visit the Department of Taxation's website at <http://www.tax.state.va.us/publications.htm>.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

New technology will bring many positive changes for the Real Estate Assessor's Office. In future years, technological advances will reduce the time appraisers and administrative personnel spend on routine tasks. In future years, appraisers may have the opportunity to telecommute, thus alleviating the need for additional workspace on the county campus.

The Information Systems Technology Department is presently working to develop a server-based application that will replace the current mainframe application utilized by the Assessor's Office. The new application will employ an Oracle database that allows for better data management and integration with Community Development's CDIS project.

Completion is anticipated in FY2005. A joint venture initiated in FY2003 with the Building Inspections Department to use digitized building plans directly from Building Inspections is being considered. If implemented, it will eliminate the need for contractors to submit multiple sets of paper plans. This would also eliminate the need for the plans to be redrawn in the Assessor's database.

If growth in Chesterfield County continues at its current rate, the department will require additional human resources to meet the increasing demands in future years. Until fiscal resources become available, the department will maximize the technological resources at its disposal.